

Safe and Efficient Transportation

I have successfully fought for Santa Clara County's fair share of federal transportation funding to improve the inter-city and intra-city travel for our fast growing region. More broadly, I have been at the forefront of Congressional efforts to craft policies that encourage sound planning for our nation's airports, highways, and public transportation systems.

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Aviation

Santa Clara County is home to [Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport](#) . Averaging roughly 384 commercial departures and landings per day, Mineta San Jose Airport is a critical gateway for Silicon Valley. I am committed to ensuring that the airport leverages federal funding to offer visitors and residents safe and efficient service.

On May 21 st, 2009 the House of Representatives passed H.R. 915, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2009. This long-awaited reauthorization bill will authorize almost \$54 billion for FAA programs over three years spanning from FY2010 through FY2012. The financing title of the bill will raise fuel taxes for corporate jets and other general aviation aircraft, but would keep fuel taxes paid by the airlines and passengers taxes at their current rates. It increases authorized funding levels to support the development of Next Generation air traffic modernization initiatives and support airport infrastructure improvement grants.

Most importantly, the version passed by the House will end the long-standing dispute between the Air Traffic Controllers and the FAA by requiring renegotiation of the contract imposed on the workers by the Bush administration that led to large numbers of Air Traffic Controllers retiring early. This in turn led to staffing shortages at a number of air traffic controller towers, increasing fatigue in the workforce and endangering travelers. I have long supported a renegotiation of the contract and hope that the Senate will act quickly to pass FAA reauthorization that will enable a swift resolution to the situation.

Flight Attendant Fatigue

In the last thirty years, the scientific community has made extraordinary breakthroughs in the study of sleep, but more research is needed on how our improved understanding of fatigue applies in an aviation environment. Flight attendants are forced to contend with time zone changes, day and night flying, changing diets, irregular sleep habits, cumulative sleep debt, and noisy hotel environments. Few comprehensive studies have been done on flight attendant fatigue, and most were in foreign countries where the regulations on duty and rest consider factors not considered by U. S. regulations.

During the summer of 2006, the Department of Transportation released a study I requested on flight attendant fatigue during 2005. I am pleased to report that H.R. 915 would require that the FAA implement the findings of the 2006 report. The job of flight attendants, first and foremost, is to protect the flying public, and we should do all we can to make sure that their work schedules allow for adequate sleep.

Rail

California High Speed Rail

The proposed [California High Speed Rail](#) system stretches from San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento in the north to Los Angeles and San Diego in the south. Operating at speeds up to 220 mph, the express travel time from downtown San Francisco to Los Angeles will be just under 2 ½ hours. The service will be an exciting and attractive option for intercity travel and will reduce congestion at California airports.

Caltrans' High Speed Rail Commission has selected a southern route for the HSR train's entrance into the Bay Area. A map of the proposed route can be found at <http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/>. After years of working with my fellow Santa Clara County legislators, supporting the southern route as the only sensible selection, I am pleased by the decision of the HSR commission. The proposed route is not only more sound from an engineering and environmental perspective but will significantly benefit Santa Clara County by stopping in a number of towns in our area.

The Federal Government has begun to recognize the potential of High Speed Rail; Congress appropriated \$8 billion for HSR projects in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. More information about this grant program can be found at the website for the Federal Railroad Administration: [here](#) .

Amtrak

Even though I am no longer a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I strongly support Amtrak and the critical role intercity passenger rail service plays in our national transportation network. As we have seen in California, Amtrak service reduces traffic congestion, as well as automobile emissions. The State of California also understands the value of Amtrak. California has the largest State-supported intercity passenger rail program today. Over 3.5 million passengers traveled on the three routes that Amtrak operates for California, which, in FY 2001, represented 15% of Amtrak's total ridership.

Amtrak was created in 1970 to preserve intercity passenger rail service after freight railroad companies successfully lobbied the federal government to relieve them of their common carrier responsibilities. Since its formation, Amtrak has been plagued by financial woes. The strong partnership between Amtrak and California should serve as a model for other states, and I will press this point with my colleagues as the Congress moves to reform Amtrak. But even greater state involvement in Amtrak operations cannot completely address Amtrak's long-term financial issues. The Amtrak Reform Council and the DOT Inspector General's Office have both estimated that Amtrak, as currently structured, requires around half a billion dollars in operating support and around a billion dollars in capital spending annually, a considerably higher level of funding than Amtrak has ever consistently received.

While I am open to considering structural reforms at Amtrak, I will not betray my support for Amtrak and the important role it plays in our nation's transportation network. I will continue to be an advocate for Amtrak and for greater federal investment in rail infrastructure. As congestion worsens on our highways and in our airways, I am committed to preserving and improving all critical modes of transportation, including rail.

The House of Representatives and President Obama recognized the importance of continued investment in the development of Amtrak by including \$1.3 billion in funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Surface Transportation

I have lived in San Jose for most of my life, and like many lifelong residents, I have seen our area grow immensely in recent years. Due to this growth, our commutes have become more difficult and more time consuming—taking time away from our daily lives that is much better spent with family and friends. Silicon Valley has among the high levels of traffic delay in nation. The average Santa Clara County motorist, according to [Texas Transportation Institute's 2005 Urban Mobility Report](#), spends 53 more hours in his or her vehicle than is necessary. Gridlock threatens to undermine

the quality of life and economic growth our region has worked so hard to achieve.

SAFETEA-LU

To reduce congestion and improve safety, I have tirelessly advocated for locally-identified transportation priorities, including a BART extension to San Jose and important highway and trail projects. In July 2005, Congress finalized legislation reauthorizing federal surface transportation programs. Referred to as SAFETEA-LU, the bill provided \$286.4 billion in guaranteed spending for highways, highway safety and transit through fiscal year 2009. This level of funding was a significant increase over previously authorized levels, but falls far short of \$375 billion the U.S. Department of Transportation has concluded is necessary to maintain and improve existing infrastructure.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has begun work on the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. Significant shortfalls are predicted in the Highway Trust Fund that provides the funding for transportation projects. The future revenue stream for the Highway Trust Fund is anticipated to be one of the major points of debate in the coming reauthorization process.

BART Extension to San Jose

[The Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project](#) contemplates an extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) system from Alameda County to Santa Clara County to connect with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) light rail system, major activity centers in downtown San Jose, the people-mover being constructed at the Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport, the Caltrain and Altamont Commuter Rail Services, the Capitol Corridor Intercity Rail Service, and Amtrak. The alignment for this project generally will parallel I-680 and I-880, which are among the most congested corridors in the nine-county Bay Area region. By extending BART to Santa Clara County, the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project will provide a rail transit alternative to relieve the severe traffic congestion that occurs in these corridors. The project also represents the last link needed to complete the connection of all of our region's rail systems around San Francisco Bay.

Over the past three years, VTA has worked extensively with the Federal Transit Administration to make the BART project more competitive for federal funding. A critical component of the process was the voter support of Measure B in November of 2008. The operations revenue that will result from our county's commitment to improved, expanded public transportation has significantly strengthened the project. As a part of my ongoing commitment to honor the spirit of the voter mandate that passed the original sales tax to fund BART in 2000, I submitted a request to the Transportation and Infrastructure committee for another authorization of the

project in the SAFETEA-LU reauthorization bill.

Highway Safety

Traffic crashes each year in the U.S. are to blame for approximately 42,000 fatalities and 2.9 million injuries. Vehicle crashes, in fact, are the leading cause of death in our nation for people ages 3 to 33. These sobering statistics demonstrate clearly that transportation officials and law enforcement authorities are battling a serious public health crisis brought on by unsafe infrastructure and reckless, distracted and fatigued drivers. These traffic incidents result in significant economic costs totaling more than \$230 billion annually.

Prior to my election to Congress, I was a board member with one of country's most effective highway safety organizations: [Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways \(CRASH\)](#). In 1998, I authored [Ki m’s Law](#), urging the California Department of Transportation to adopt regulations for maximum truck lengths on highways identified as unsuitable for long trucks. On Thanksgiving Day in 1991, Californian Kim Mosqueda and her unborn baby were crushed to death by a 65-foot truck offtracking around a sharp curve on a scenic mountain road.

In the Congress, I have continued my efforts to make America's highways safer for everyone. I have continuously opposed efforts to extend workdays for truckers from 14 to 16 hours—almost double the workday of an average American. In 2005, I offered an amendment to H.R. 3 to encourage the creation of DWI courts. DWI courts seek to reduce these numbers by targeting repeat offenders, who have demonstrated that the traditional court system is not an adequate deterrent. Repeat offenders prove that punishment without treatment and rigorous accountability is not an effective strategy to protect the public from drunk drivers. My amendment, which passed by voice vote, encouraged their creation by making clear their eligibility for Section 203 funds.

As a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, I have continued to monitor the funding of DWI courts. Finally, in the 111 th Congress I cosponsored H.R. 1618, the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act which places strict limits on the size and weight of commercial trucks in order to preserve the safety of our Nation's roads.